About Ireland and England

NO history of Ireland ever was, ever will be written suitably to both sides. The latest attempt at a fair statement of the case is *Ireland and England*, by Edward R. Turner, professor of European history in the University of Michigan. Sir Edward Carson would not issue it as a handbook of the Unionist cause. Mr. de Valera would throw it in the fire, we fear, after coming to Page 40, where the author, after stating the obvious truth that "Irishmen think it a misfortune that their country was conquered by England," adds that "it was a far greater misfortune that the conquest once undertaken was not during such a long time made complete."

Mr. Turner is looking at the matter from a kindly Michigan viewpoint. He feels that Ireland would have been better off materially if England had made a complete job of it; what he does not realize is that conquering Ireland and conquering the Irish are two different jobs. Peace, such as the British arms brought about in olden times in Ireland, was what Macaulay called "the ghastly tranquillity of exhaustion."

Mr. Turner does not spare England in his recital of the Irish grievances. He tells us what Spenser saw when the peasants "looked like anatomies of death" and "spake like ghosts crying out of their graves." That was after Elizabeth had starved 30,000 to death in Munster. Such crimes as this, says the author, "must always be remembered in connection with the later lawlessness of the Irish and the bitterness of the land wars which have sometimes disquieted the island. Deeply rooted in the native mind were the feeling that the rightful owners had once been supplanted by alien masters and the instinct, based upon old tribal law, that an occupier ought not to be evicted."

Of the religious persecution in Ireland in the eighteenth century Mr. Turner, after condemning those responsible for it, remarks: "But actually the persecution in Ireland was far less than that which destroyed Protestantism in Bohemia and Spain." True, perhaps, but the Irish outrages occurred more than a century after the Continental oppressions, and a century should have meant some progress in civilization. Besides, so far as religious persecution was concerned the Irish Catholics could claim to be innocent bystanders.

"Ireland in the eighteenth century," says Mr. Turner, "was administered by England with much of the brutal and obstinate tyranny that our free peoples feared from a Prussia triumphant." It was Ireland's particular misfortune, he adds, that she was in such peculiar position that unlike the mistreated colonies of England and Spain in America, she could not break away.

Mr. Turner has a word in defence of the Fenians of 1865. He sees in them now, from a distance, "something like the career of the abolitionists of Garrison in America before the Civil War. . . . Their deeds were unlovely; those for whom they were working must often have despised them, but they did inspire fear, they did make men think, they did get attention which milder methods and more constitutional ways could not secure. . . . What the Fenians did we condemn in itself, and it had to be sternly repressed, but it arose out of evil conditions, and something of that they did brought those conditions to an end." Lawlessness, cries one reader; Martyrdom, sighs another.

Coming down to the last decade of Irish history, Mr. Turner quotes from the memorable speech made by Mr. Asquith in the House in April, 1913, reviewing the insistent demands of the Irish for Home Rule since the people found political voice:

"When Mr. Gladstone spoke in 1893 he had in support of the proposition that 'Ireland demands Home Rule' the evidence of three successive general elections. Since then . . . we have had eight general elections . . . but through all the welter and confusion, amid all the varying phases and fields of our electoral and parliamentary campaigns, one thing has remained constant, subject neither to eclipse nor wane—the insistence and persistence of the Irish demand."

Thus spoke the man who, with the cooperation of Redmond and the Nationalists, seemed about to solve the Irish problem when Carson and the war intervened.

We had expected to find in the book something more definite about the failure of the Irish Convention of 1918, but Mr. Turner, after dealing with the earnest work of Sir Horace Plunkett, George Russell and the others of that group, says that the report was adopted, but "not by a decisive majority." "In the end the Unionists remained irreconcilable."

"A system of Home Rule would have almost certainly have been established in Ireland if the war had not broken out," says Mr. Turner. This is underestimating Sir Edward Carson's political strength. All that, however, is water passed the mill. Mr. Turner indulges, on his last page, in some pleasant prophecy:

"Sinn Fein will fail. . . . But its work is not wholly in vain. Because of its very extremeness the more moderate parties will be more able to compromise and settle the problem. The liberalism of England and the greater spirit of liberalism everywhere will shortly bring to Ireland the 'freedom' and the 'self-determination' for which she is asking, in some sort of satisfactory self-government within the empire—just as soon as Irishmen agree among themselves. . . . The difference between Ulster and the rest of Ireland will abate."

Any one can see how easily this may be accomplished—if the twenty-five Carsonite members of Parliament will link arms with the seventy-three Sinn Feiners.

IRELAND AND ENGLAND. By Edward R. Turner. The Century Company.

A Sherlock Reporter

WALKING homeward from his work in a London newspaper office early one morning Frank Spargo chanced upon a murder, that of an unknown man without a bit of "identification" on him save a scrap of paper bearing the name of a young lawyer who once had sold Spargo an article for his paper. Starting thus, J. S. Fletcher tells a first rate mystery story in *The Middle Temple Murder*, one that is not at all profound and is written much as such a newspaper man as Spargo is represented to be might write it.

The narrative leads directly from one point to another, just as a reporter would ferret such a crime to its solution provided he was industrious and luck was with him. One of the "prettiest" points in the tale is the finding of the silver pass to the Market Milcaster race meetings, a clue that leads Spargo away from London and into a fresh coil of circumstances bearing on the identification of the murdered man.

Another fillip to the plot's interest is in the something, more than suspicion, that is cast on the father of Spargo's fiancee and eventually leads to his being arrested—only to be freed in the end through the reporter's industry and skill in following clues. We are ready to believe that purists in criminal fiction will take exception to the manner in which the mystery is cleared up, and our personal opinion is that Spargo was taking a long chance to send the telegram he did in the end ordering the arrest of one of the characters for murder. But by the time this denouement is reached, readers will have had such fun that they will be in no mood for criticism of an unfavorable sort.

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE MURDER. By J. S. Fletcher. Alfred A. Knopf.

"NO volume of more historical importance will come out of the war"—E. P. Dutton & Co. speaking, with fine prophetic conviction—"than *Field Marshal Haig's Despatches*," which will be published by (we forget who is to publish it) the latter part of next month. Of all brief news items we ever read that appeared likely to be historically important, the one containing the Field Marshal's backs to the wall order was easily first.

For and About Divers Girls

THE eternal feminine has no manifestation more provocative than that of the Girl.

It has so many phases—as the girl of moods, the pretty girl, the ugly one, the sweet, the sullen, the tricksy, the straightforward, the girl evanescent, the girl eternal—each adds to the variety of living and the perplexings of mere man.

Also they are staple in the story books. I ask you what would be a tale without at least one girl in it? Maybe not the heroine, maybe long beyond proper girl age—but unless you find her that book will show a lack. All the later fascinations of *Vanity Fair* do not for me eclipse the picture of Becky flinging back at her preceptress *Johnson's Dictionary*.

Though a worth while book is pretty certain to have a girl, it by no means follows that a girl, or even several, can make a book worth while. *Barbara of Baltimore* is not a case in point. The girl who gives name to the book is an engaging young creature, albeit built after a model that is well worn, not to say shop worn—the demi-semi-martyr type, persecuted not for righteousenss but for too abundant charm.

Sometimes a lone orphan, sometimes a sister—here she approaches the lines of Cinderella—sometimes a stepchild or kinswoman, eating the grudged and bitter bread of dependence—and bearing up so beautifully she wins hands down over the favorite, no matter what the odds.

Sunshiny Barbara is only a partial martyr—even Alix, who imposes on her and does her dirt in love affairs, has lapses into natural feeling. The story is very well told, considering its manner of telling; several narrators, each speaking in the first person. It has a war flavor of course—the hero being one Patrick Francis Goven Deems, sometime a British officer, heir to an Irish estate and title and supposedly suffering from shell shock or something as elusive, who has come to the Crane house in hope that its master, Barbara's father, may cure him.

The Cranes are poor, but ever so well born—their house is old and so rambling and full of architectural quirks it could give cards and spades yet beat any ordinary haunted castle. It has history and achieves mystery, by harboring an adroit, thieving spy. The depredations of this light fingered person are rather skilfully used to further the love complications of Barbara and Patrick, by making each mistake the other for a kleptomaniac to be shielded from suspicion. Alix, who has marked Patrick for her own, adds a jealous maiden's mite to their troubles—but why try to tell all the story? Unfair—besides there's such a lot more of it. Missing documents, local history and color, Francis Scott Key and "The Star Spangled Banner"—ever and ever so many things. All's well that ends well—suffice it that the story ends exactly as it should—in a way to delight and thrill all readers who love love.

Mrs. Grace McLeod Rogers tells with love and knowledge of her own Nova Scotia, but in *Joan at Halfway* falls into a habit of sinful overtelling. It makes her book heavy in the hand and in the mind. How could it be otherwise, when each salient incident is related at least three times over—and always with meticulous detail? All its dramatic personages are Scotch-Canadians, well drawn no doubt—but some of them, to an outsider, appear scarcely to be worth the drawing. It seems rather a pity to put "thrawn" and twisted folk between book covers, simply because they are thrawn and twisted. Still, in picturing a human backwater, where life eddies instead of flowing, where inbreeding accentuates natural cussedenss, it may not be possible to get away from such types.

Uncle Garrett, lord of Halfway, was head of the Wisdom family, which had spread and branched and married in and out through five generations until tracing relationships was work for a Philadelphia lawyer. He must have been "gey ill to live wi'," but some scant observation of cranky Scotsmen leads me to believe him possible. Rich, childless, crippled, crabbed, with a fine turn for tyranny and a tongue like a curry comb, he dominates the book, I think, to its detriment.

All the love in it is legendary—evidently meant strictly for barely adolescent consumption. A pity, as, though its matter suits, its manner is for older folk.

M. McC. W.

BARBARA OF BALTIMORE—By Catherine Haviland Gaynor. George H. Doran Company.

JOAN AT HALFWAY—By Grace McLeod Rogers. George H. Doran Company.

Britain's Women Novelists

"IT was reserved for George Meredith to understand women." This sentence closes R. Brimley Johnson's book on *The Women Novelists*.

In spite of this rather sweeping though wholly tenable assertion, Mr. Johnson's studies reveal a close sympathy with and understanding of the women novelists of Great Britain, from Fanny Burney to George Eliot. Perhaps, after all, only a man can understand women, or, at any rate, interpret them in terms of the highest art. If, then, it was given to the creator of Clara and Diana and Lucy to see deeper into the souls of women, it is reasonably sure that his way was paved for him by the women novelists; indeed, is there not something about *Pride and Prejudice* that inevitably reminds you of *Diana of the Crossways*?

Mr. Johnson opens his study with a brief introduction on Fanny Burney's precursors, although he reserves for her the honor of being the "first woman novelist." Two chapters are devoted to her work and influence; these are followed by an interchapter on the writers from 1782 to 1811, and this leads to the three illuminating chapters on Jane Austen. The Brontës come next, and finally George Eliot.

The Women Novelists is an entertaining volume; a volume, that is, not wholly devoted to academic research, nor primarily intended, I think, to instruct. Mr. Johnson's easy style and intimate manner proclaim him rather the casual essayist than the literary historian, although I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of his historical data—unless it be his readable style!

The Women Novelists is not the first book of its sort, but I am reasonably sure it is the most interesting. So long as the Woman Question in whatever form is still debated it will be necessary to rewrite such a work as this. When women not only have the vote, but deprive men of their franchise, it will be time to treat the subject again.

B. H. C.

THE WOMEN NOVELISTS. By R. Brimley Johnson. Charles Scribner's Sons.

MRS. IRVING CURTIS, author of *A Challenge to Adventure*, published by the Marshall Jones Company, has been a successful writer of stories for young people. Her new novel is a romance of youth, for readers both young and old.

ROBERT CHAUVELOT, author of *Parvati*, a novel of present day life in India recently published by the Century Company, is a son-in-law of Alphonse Daudet. He has just sold opera libretto rights in the book.